

THE KING OF THE GOLDEN RIVER

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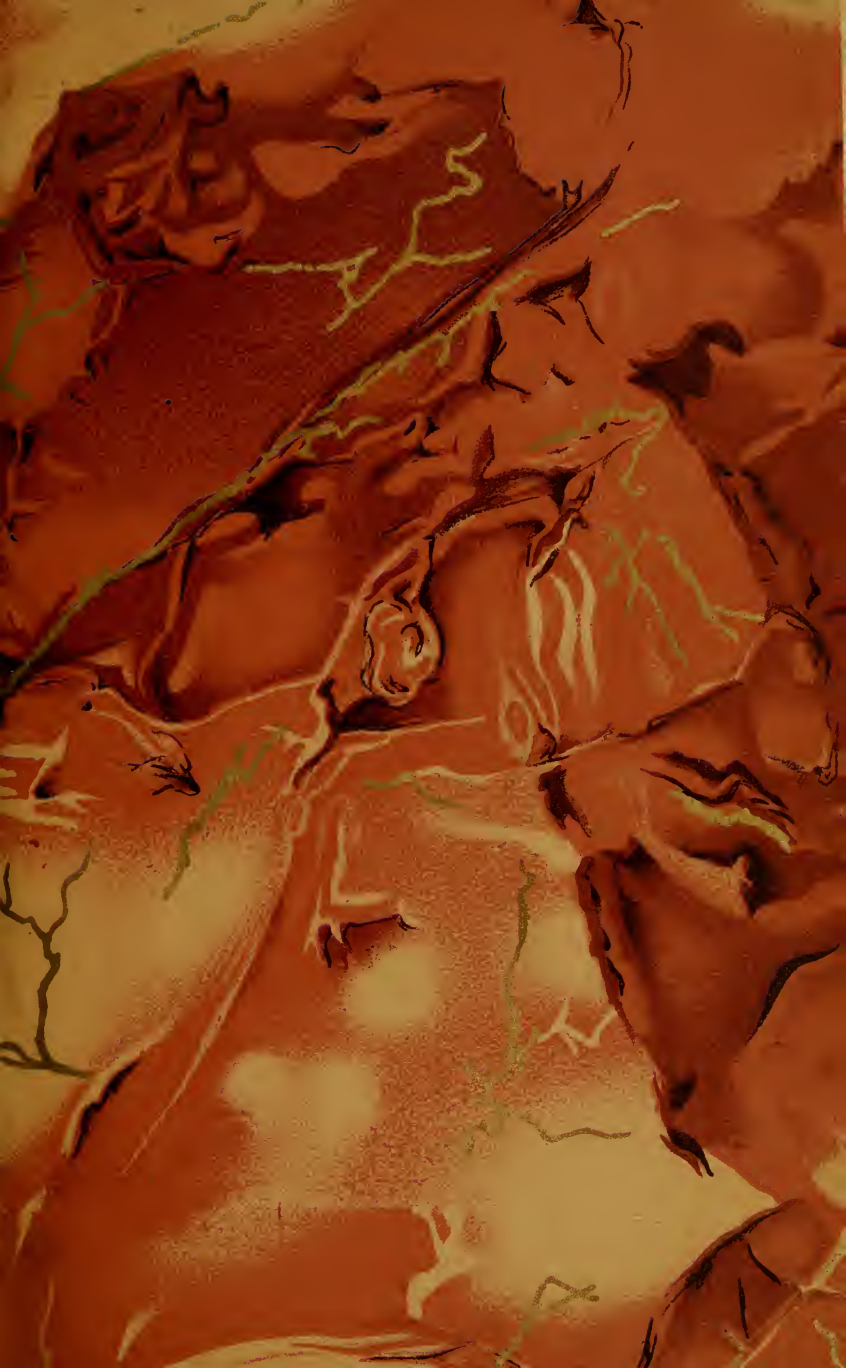


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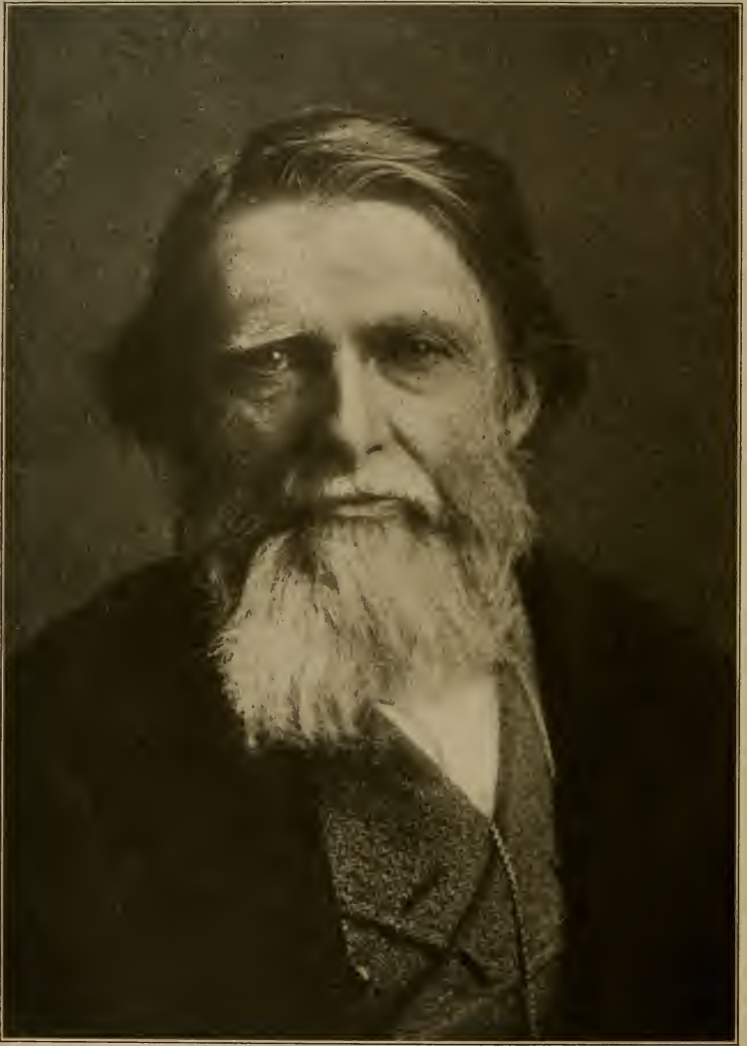
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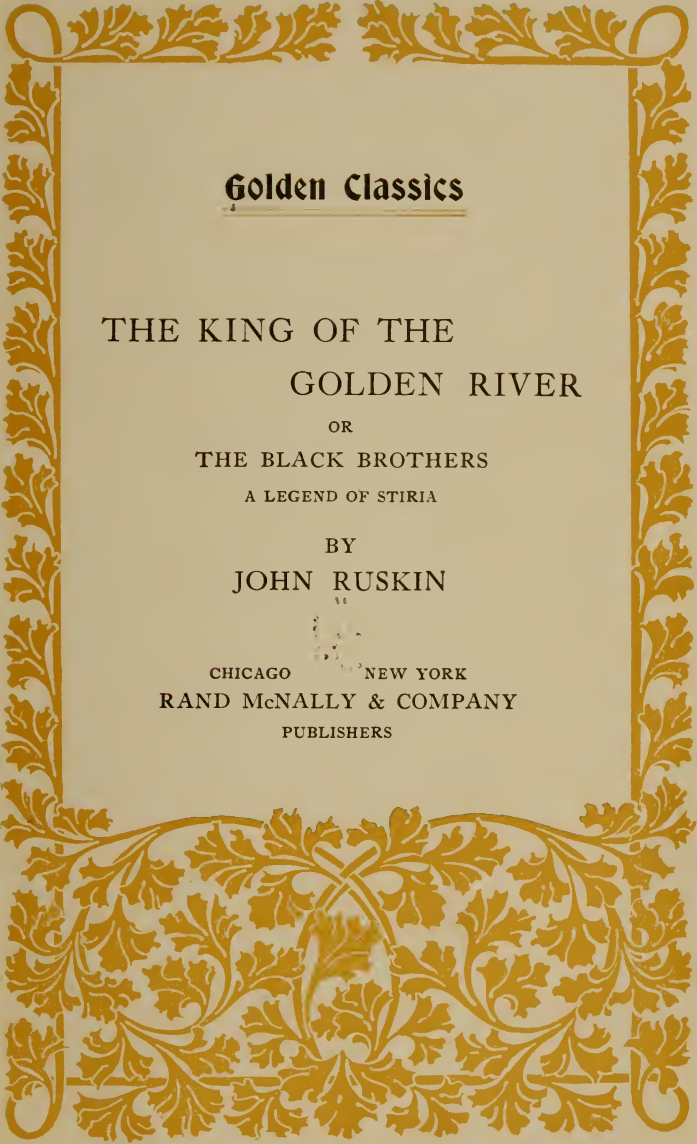
The King of the Golden River

The text of this edition of "The King of the Golden River" agrees with that of the standard English edition, which is the fifth London edition, as corrected by the author, and issued by the original publishers of the story, Smith, Elder & Company, London, 1863.



JOHN RUSKIN

One of the foremost writers and critics of the Eighteenth Century, who became a great preacher of righteousness, though not in pulpits; and who wrote volumes of soul-stirring poetry, though not in verse.



Golden Classics

THE KING OF THE
GOLDEN RIVER

OR
THE BLACK BROTHERS
A LEGEND OF STIRIA

BY
JOHN RUSKIN

CHICAGO NEW YORK
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INTRODUCTION TO THE SERIES

The acknowledged classics of English literature are many, and the number of those works which are worthy of being ranked among the classics grows from year to year. Whosoever would know the best that has been written in our tongue, can scarcely begin his acquaintance too soon in his own life after he has learned to read. Nor can he be too careful about the new members he admits to the circle of his book friendships.

The gardener may have prepared his ground with scrupulous and rigid care, but unless he follows his planting with unremitting vigilance, the labor of preparation will have been in vain. A few days of neglect and the garden will be smothered in weeds. Profitable knowledge of the best in our literature must be sought with like vigilance and patience. The taste for it should be implanted early and when established must be cultivated and maintained with constancy. It should also be intelligently adapted to increasing years and widening experience.

The first few books in the *Golden Classics* have been chosen as the foundation for a permanent and more extended series. They have been taken from the writings of acknowledged Masters of the English tongue. Among these immortals are Irving, Dickens, Ruskin, Longfellow, and Goldsmith; no names in English literature are more beloved and honored.

More vital even than their great worth as literature, these selections have, in eminent degree, that wonder-

ful quality of the works of human genius which stimulates the imagination of the reader, refines his taste, broadens and deepens his love of letters, inspires him with generous sympathy for all that is uplifting, and quickens his aversion toward all that is trashy or in any way unworthy.

It is true in literature as it is in money that the truest capacity to detect the counterfeit is intimate, familiar knowledge of the genuine. It is not enough merely to know that there are works in our literature which have proven their immortal, classic quality, but equally as important to be able to name some or all of them. It is not enough even to be able to say that one has read them. They must be, so to speak, mentally absorbed. They must sink deep into and be assimilated by our intellectual life, and so become a part of our being. By just so much as any generation accomplishes this, and makes itself affectionately familiar with all that is possible of that literature which has crystallized into immortality; by just so much it has raised the plane on which the next generation must begin its career, and thus has contributed toward the uplifting evolution of humanity.

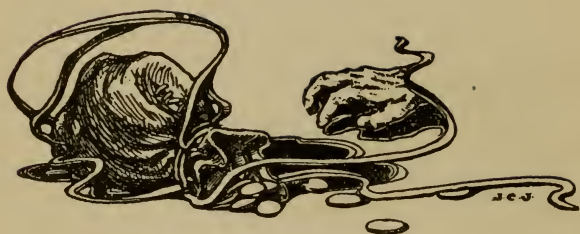
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(Taken from the first edition, 1850)

THE Publishers think it due to the Author of this Fairy Tale to state the circumstances under which it appears.

THE King of the Golden River was written in 1841, at the request of a very young lady, and solely for her amusement, without any idea of publication. It has since remained in the possession of a friend, to whose suggestion, and the passive assent of the Author, the Publishers are indebted for the opportunity of printing it.







"Gluck sat down by the fire"

THE KING OF THE GOLDEN RIVER

OR,

THE BLACK BROTHERS

CHAPTER I.

HOW THE AGRICULTURAL SYSTEM OF THE BLACK
BROTHERS WAS INTERFERED WITH BY
SOUTH-WEST WIND, ESQUIRE.

IN a secluded and mountainous part of Stiria there was, in old time, a valley of the most surprising and luxuriant fertility. It was surrounded, on all sides, by steep and rocky mountains, rising into peaks, which were always covered with snow, and from which a number of torrents descended in constant cataracts. One of these fell westward, over the face of a crag so high, that, when the sun had set to everything else, and all below was darkness, his beams still shone full upon this waterfall, so that it looked like a shower of gold. It was, therefore, called by the people of the neighborhood, the Golden River. It was strange that none of these streams fell into the valley itself. They all descended on the other

side of the mountains, and wound away through broad plains and by populous cities. But the
25 clouds were drawn so constantly to the snowy hills, and rested so softly in the circular hollow, that in time of drouth and heat, when all the country round was burnt up, there was still rain in the little valley; and its crops were so heavy,
30 and its hay so high, and its apples so red, and its grapes so blue, and its wine so rich, and its honey so sweet, that it was a marvel to every one who beheld it, and was commonly called the Treasure Valley.

35 The whole of this little valley belonged to three brothers, called Schwartz, Hans, and Gluck. Schwartz and Hans, the two elder brothers, were very ugly men, with overhanging eyebrows and small dull eyes, which were always half shut, so
40 that you couldn't see into *them*, and always fancied they saw very far into *you*. They lived by farming the Treasure Valley, and very good farmers they were. They killed everything that did not pay for its eating. They shot the blackbirds
45 because they pecked the fruit; and killed the hedgehogs, lest they should suck the cows; they poisoned the crickets for eating the crumbs in the kitchen; and smothered the cicadas, which used to sing all summer in the lime trees. They
50 worked their servants without any wages, till they would not work any more, and then quarreled with them, and turned them out of doors without paying them. It would have been very odd, if

with such a farm, and such a system of farming, they hadn't got very rich; and very rich they *did* get. They generally contrived to keep their corn by them till it was very dear, and then sell it for twice its value; they had heaps of gold lying about on their floors, yet it was never known that they had given so much as a penny⁶⁰ or a crust in charity; they never went to mass; grumbled perpetually at paying tithes; and were, in a word, of so cruel and grinding a temper, as to receive from all those with whom they had any dealings, the nickname of the "Black Brothers."⁶⁵

The youngest brother, Gluck, was as completely opposed, in both appearance and character, to his seniors as could possibly be imagined or desired. He was not above twelve years old, fair, blue-eyed, and kind in temper to every living⁷⁰ thing. He did not, of course, agree particularly well with his brothers, or rather, they did not agree with *him*. He was usually appointed to the honorable office of turnspit, when there was anything to roast, which was not often; for, to⁷⁵ do the brothers justice, they were hardly less sparing upon themselves than upon other people. At other times he used to clean the shoes, floors, and sometimes the plates, occasionally getting what was left on them, by way of encouragement,⁸⁰ and a wholesome quantity of dry blows, by way of education.

Things went on in this manner for a long time. At last came a very wet summer, and everything

85 went wrong in the country around. The hay had hardly been got in, when the haystacks were floated bodily down to the sea by an inundation; the vines were cut to pieces with the hail; the corn was all killed by a black blight; only in
90 the Treasure Valley, as usual, all was safe. As it had rain when there was rain nowhere else, so it had sun when there was sun nowhere else. Everybody came to buy corn at the farm, and went away pouring maledictions on the Black
95 Brothers. They asked what they liked, and got it, except from the poor people, who could only beg, and several of whom were starved at their very door, without the slightest regard or notice.

It was drawing towards winter, and very cold
100 weather, when one day the two elder brothers had gone out, with their usual warning to little Gluck, who was left to mind the roast, that he was to let nobody in, and give nothing out. Gluck sat down quite close to the fire, for it was rain-
105 ing very hard, and the kitchen walls were by no means dry or comfortable looking. He turned and turned, and the roast got nice and brown. "What a pity," thought Gluck, "my brothers never ask anybody to dinner. I'm sure, when they've
110 got such a nice piece of mutton as this, and nobody else has got so much as a piece of dry bread, it would do their hearts good to have somebody to eat it with them."

Just as he spoke, there came a double knock
115 at the house door, yet heavy and dull, as though

the knocker had been tied up — more like a puff than a knock.

“It must be the wind,” said Gluck; “nobody else would venture to knock double knocks at our door.” 120

No; it wasn't the wind; there it came again very hard, and what was particularly astounding, the knocker seemed to be in a hurry, and not to be in the least afraid of the consequences. Gluck went to the window, opened it, and put his head 125 out to see who it was.

It was the most extraordinary looking little gentleman he had ever seen in his life. He had a very large nose, slightly brass-colored; his cheeks were very round, and very red, and might have 130 warranted a supposition that he had been blowing a refractory fire for the last eight-and-forty hours; his eyes twinkled merrily through long silky eyelashes, his mustaches curled twice round like a corkscrew on each side of his mouth, and 135 his hair, of a curious mixed pepper-and-salt color, descended far over his shoulders. He was about four-feet-six in height, and wore a conical pointed cap of nearly the same altitude, decorated with a black feather some three feet long. His doublet 140 was prolonged behind into something resembling a violent exaggeration of what is now termed a “swallow tail,” but was much obscured by the swelling folds of an enormous black, glossy-looking cloak, which must have been very much too 145 long in calm weather, as the wind, whistling

round the old house, carried it clear out from the wearer's shoulders to about four times his own length.

150 Gluck was so perfectly paralyzed by the singular appearance of his visitor, that he remained fixed without uttering a word, until the old gentleman, having performed another, and a more energetic concerto on the knocker, turned round
155 to look after his fly-away cloak. In so doing he caught sight of Gluck's little yellow head jammed in the window, with its mouth and eyes very wide open indeed.

"Hollo!" said the little gentleman, "that's not
160 the way to answer the door: I'm wet, let me in!"

To do the little gentleman justice, he *was* wet. His feather hung down between his legs like a beaten puppy's tail, dripping like an umbrella; and from the ends of his mustaches the water
165 was running into his waistcoat pockets, and out again like a mill stream.

"I beg pardon, sir," said Gluck, "I'm very sorry, but I really can't."

"Can't what?" said the old gentleman.

170 "I can't let you in, sir, — I can't indeed; my brothers would beat me to death, sir, if I thought of such a thing. What do you want, sir?"

"Want?" said the old gentleman, petulantly.

"I want fire, and shelter; and there's your great
175 fire there blazing, crackling, and dancing on the walls, with nobody to feel it. Let me in, I say; I only want to warm myself."

Gluck had had his head, by this time, so long out of the window, that he began to feel it was really unpleasantly cold, and when he turned, and saw the beautiful fire rustling and roaring, and throwing long bright tongues up the chimney, as if it were licking its chops at the savory smell of the leg of mutton, his heart melted within him that it should be burning away for nothing. "He does look *very* wet," said little Gluck; "I'll just let him in for a quarter of an hour." Round he went to the door, and opened it; and as the little gentleman walked in, there came a gust of wind through the house, that made the old chimneys totter.

"That's a good boy," said the little gentleman. "Never mind your brothers. I'll talk to them."

"Pray, sir, don't do any such thing," said Gluck. "I can't let you stay till they come; they'd be the death of me."

"Dear me," said the old gentleman, "I'm very sorry to hear that. How long may I stay?"

"Only till the mutton's done, sir," replied Gluck, "and it's very brown."

Then the old gentleman walked into the kitchen, and sat himself down on the hob, with the top of his cap accommodated up the chimney, for it was a great deal too high for the roof.

"You'll soon dry there, sir," said Gluck, and sat down again to turn the mutton. But the old gentleman did *not* dry there, but went on drip,

drip, dripping among the cinders, and the fire
210 fizzed and sputtered, and began to look very black,
and uncomfortable: never was such a cloak; every
fold in it ran like a gutter.

"I beg pardon, sir," said Gluck at length, after
watching the water spreading in long, quicksilver-
215 like streams over the floor for a quarter of an
hour; "mayn't I take your cloak?"

"No, thank you," said the old gentleman.

"Your cap, sir?"

"I am all right, thank you," said the old gentle-
220 man rather gruffly.

"But — sir — I'm very sorry," said Gluck hesi-
tatingly; "but — really, sir — you're — putting
the fire out."

"It'll take longer to do the mutton, then," re-
225 plied his visitor dryly.

Gluck was very much puzzled by the behavior
of his guest; it was such a strange mixture of
coolness and humility. He turned away at the
string meditatively for another five minutes.

230 "That mutton looks very nice," said the old
gentleman at length. "Can't you give me a little
bit?"

"Impossible, sir," said Gluck.

"I'm very hungry," continued the old gentle-
235 man; "I've had nothing to eat yesterday, nor to-
day. They surely couldn't miss a bit from the
knuckle!"

He spoke in so very melancholy a tone, that
it quite melted Gluck's heart. "They promised



"What did you keep me waiting in the rain for?"

me one slice to-day, sir," said he; "I can give you that, but not a bit more."

"That's a good boy," said the old gentleman again.

Then Gluck warmed a plate, and sharpened a knife. "I don't care if I do get beaten for it," thought he. Just as he had cut a large slice out of the mutton, there came a tremendous rap at the door. The old gentleman jumped off the hob, as if it had suddenly become inconveniently warm. Gluck fitted the slice into the mutton again, with desperate efforts at exactitude, and ran to open the door.

"What did you keep us waiting in the rain for?" said Schwartz, as he walked in, throwing his umbrella in Gluck's face. "Ay! what for, indeed, you little vagabond?" said Hans, administering an educational box on the ear, as he followed his brother into the kitchen.

"Bless my soul!" said Schwartz when he opened the door.

"Amen," said the little gentleman, who had taken his cap off and was standing in the middle of the kitchen, bowing with the utmost possible velocity.

"Who's that?" said Schwartz, catching up a rolling-pin, and turning to Gluck with a fierce frown.

"I don't know, indeed, brother," said Gluck in great terror.

"How did he get in?" roared Schwartz.

"My dear brother," said Gluck, deprecatingly, "he was so *very* wet!"

The rolling-pin was descending on Gluck's head; but, at the instant, the old gentleman interposed his conical cap, on which it crashed with a²⁷⁵ shock that shook the water out of it all over the room. What was very odd, the rolling-pin no sooner touched the cap, than it flew out of Schwartz's hand, spinning like a straw in a high wind, and fell into the corner at the farther end²⁸⁰ of the room.

"Who are you, sir?" demanded Schwartz, turning upon him.

"What's your business?" snarled Hans.

"I'm a poor old man, sir," the little gentle-²⁸⁵man began very modestly, "and I saw your fire through the window, and begged shelter for a quarter of an hour."

"Have the goodness to walk out again, then," said Schwartz. "We've quite enough water in²⁹⁰ our kitchen, without making it a drying house."

"It is a cold day to turn an old man out in, sir; look at my gray hairs." They hung down to his shoulders, as I told you before.

"Ay!" said Hans, "there are enough of them²⁹⁵ to keep you warm. Walk!"

"I'm very, very hungry, sir; couldn't you spare me a bit of bread before I go?"

"Bread, indeed!" said Schwartz, "do you suppose we've nothing to do with our bread but to³⁰⁰ give it to such red-nosed fellows as you?"

"Why don't you sell your feather?" said Hans, sneeringly. "Out with you!"

"A little bit," said the old gentleman.

305 "Be off!" said Schwartz.

"Pray, gentlemen —"

"Off, and be hanged!" cried Hans, seizing him by the collar. But he had no sooner touched the old gentleman's collar, than away he went after
310 the rolling-pin, spinning round and round, till he fell into the corner on the top of it. Then Schwartz was very angry, and ran at the old gentleman to turn him out; but he also had hardly touched him, when away he went after Hans and
315 the rolling-pin, and hit his head against the wall as he tumbled into the corner. And so there they lay, all three.

Then the old gentleman spun himself round with velocity in the opposite direction; continued
320 to spin until his long cloak was all wound neatly about him; clapped his cap on his head, very much on one side (for it could not stand upright without going through the ceiling), gave an additional twist to his corkscrew mustaches, and
325 replied with perfect coolness: "Gentlemen, I wish you a very good morning. At twelve o'clock to-night I'll call again; after such a refusal of hospitality as I have just experienced, you will not be surprised if that visit is the last I ever pay you."

330 "If ever I catch you here again," muttered Schwartz, coming, half frightened, out of the corner — but, before he could finish his sentence, the

old gentleman had shut the house door behind him with a great bang: and there drove past the window, at the same instant, a wreath of ragged³³⁵ cloud, that whirled and rolled away down the valley in all manner of shapes; turning over and over in the air, and melting away at last in a gush of rain.

"A very pretty business, indeed, Mr. Gluck!"³⁴⁰ said Schwartz. "Dish the mutton, sir. If ever I catch you at such a trick again — bless me, why the mutton's been cut!"

"You promised me one slice, brother, you know," said Gluck.³⁴⁵

"Oh! and you were cutting it hot, I suppose, and going to catch all the gravy. It'll be long before I promise you such a thing again. Leave the room, sir; and have the kindness to wait in the coal-cellar till I call you."³⁵⁰

Gluck left the room melancholy enough. The brothers ate as much mutton as they could, locked the rest in the cupboard, and proceeded to get very drunk after dinner.

Such a night as it was! Howling wind, and³⁵⁵ rushing rain, without intermission. The brothers had just sense enough left to put up all the shutters, and double bar the door, before they went to bed. They usually slept in the same room. As the clock struck twelve, they were both³⁶⁰ awakened by a tremendous crash. Their door burst open with a violence that shook the house from top to bottom.

"What's that?" cried Schwartz, starting up
365 in his bed.

"Only I," said the little gentleman.

The two brothers sat up on their bolster, and stared into the darkness. The room was full of water, and by a misty moonbeam, which found
370 its way through a hole in the shutter, they could see in the midst of it an enormous foam globe, spinning round, and bobbing up and down like a cork, on which, as on a most luxurious cushion, reclined the little old gentleman, cap and all.
375 There was plenty of room for it now, for the roof was off.

"Sorry to incommode you," said their visitor, ironically. "I'm afraid your beds are dampish; perhaps you had better go to your brother's room:
380 I've left the ceiling on, there."

They required no second admonition, but rushed into Gluck's room, wet through, and in an agony of terror.

"You'll find my card on the kitchen table,"
385 the old gentleman called after them. "Remember, the *last* visit."

"Pray Heaven it may!" said Schwartz, shuddering. And the foam globe disappeared.

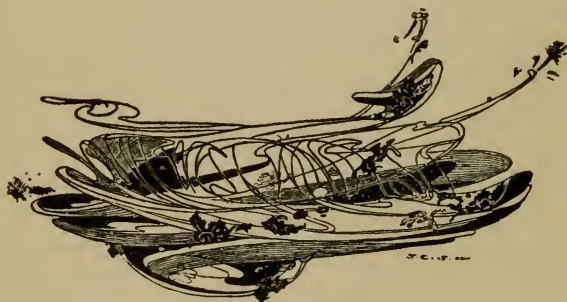
Dawn came at last, and the two brothers looked
390 out of Gluck's little window in the morning. The Treasure Valley was one mass of ruin and desolation. The inundation had swept away trees, crops, and cattle, and left in their stead a waste of red sand, and gray mud. The two brothers



"The two brothers sat up on their bolster"

395 crept shivering and horror-struck into the kitchen.
The water had gutted the whole first floor; corn,
money, almost every movable thing had been
swept away, and there was left only a small white
card on the kitchen table. On it, in large, breezy,
400 long-legged letters, were engraved the words:—

South-West Wind, Esquire



CHAPTER II.

OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE THREE BROTHERS
AFTER THE VISIT OF SOUTH-WEST WIND,
ESQUIRE; AND HOW LITTLE GLUCK HAD
AN INTERVIEW WITH THE KING
OF THE GOLDEN RIVER.

SOUTH-WEST WIND, Esquire, was as good as his word. After the momentous visit above related, he entered the Treasure⁴¹⁰ Valley no more; and, what was worse, he had so much influence with his relations, the West Winds in general, and used it so effectually, that they all adopted a similar line of conduct. So no rain fell in the valley from one year's end to⁴¹⁵ another. Though everything remained green and flourishing in the plains below, the inheritance of the Three Brothers was a desert. What had once been the richest soil in the kingdom, became a shifting heap of red sand; and the brothers,⁴²⁰ unable longer to contend with the adverse skies, abandoned their valueless patrimony in despair, to seek some means of gaining a livelihood among the cities and people of the plains. All their money was gone, and they had nothing left⁴²⁵ but some curious old-fashioned pieces of gold plates, the last remnants of their ill-gotten wealth.

"Suppose we turn goldsmiths?" said Schwartz to Hans, as they entered the large city. "It is a
430 good knave's trade; we can put a great deal of copper into the gold, without any one's finding it out."

The thought was agreed to be a very good one; they hired a furnace, and turned goldsmiths.
435 But two slight circumstances affected their trade: the first, that people did not approve of the coppered gold; the second, that the two elder brothers, whenever they had sold anything, used to leave little Gluck to mind the furnace, and go and drink
440 out the money in the ale-house next door. So they melted all their gold, without making money enough to buy more, and were at last reduced to one large drinking mug, which an uncle of his had given to little Gluck, and which he was very fond
445 of, and would not have parted with for the world; though he never drank anything out of it but milk and water. The mug was a very odd mug to look at. The handle was formed of two wreaths of flowing golden hair, so finely spun that it looked
450 more like silk than metal, and these wreaths descended into, and mixed with, a beard and whiskers of the same exquisite workmanship, which surrounded and decorated a very fierce little face, of the reddest gold imaginable, right
455 in the front of the mug, with a pair of eyes in it which seemed to command its whole circumference. It was impossible to drink out of the mug without being subjected to an intense gaze

out of the side of these eyes; and Schwartz positively averred, that once, after emptying it, full ⁴⁶⁰ of Rhenish, seventeen times, he had seen them wink! When it came to the mug's turn to be made into spoons, it half broke poor little Gluck's heart; but the brothers only laughed at him, tossed the mug into the melting-pot, and staggered ⁴⁶⁵ out to the ale-house: leaving him, as usual, to pour the gold into bars, when it was all ready.

When they were gone, Gluck took a farewell look at his old friend in the melting-pot. The ⁴⁷⁰ flowing hair was all gone; nothing remained but the red nose, and the sparkling eyes, which looked more malicious than ever. "And no wonder," thought Gluck, "after being treated in that way." He sauntered disconsolately to the win- ⁴⁷⁵ dow, and sat himself down to catch the fresh evening air, and escape the hot breath of the furnace. Now this window commanded a direct view of the range of mountains, which, as I told you before, overhung the Treasure Valley, and ⁴⁸⁰ more especially of the peak from which fell the Golden River. It was just at the close of the day, and when Gluck sat down at the window, he saw the rocks of the mountain tops, all crimson and purple with the sunset; and there were ⁴⁸⁵ bright tongues of fiery cloud burning and quivering about them; and the river, brighter than all, fell, in a waving column of pure gold, from precipice to precipice, with the double arch of

490 a broad purple rainbow stretched across it, flushing and fading alternately in the wreaths of spray.

"Ah!" said Gluck aloud, after he had looked at it for a while, "if that river were really all
495 gold, what a nice thing it would be."

"No, it wouldn't, Gluck," said a clear metallic voice, close at his ear.

"Bless me! what's that?" exclaimed Gluck, jumping up. There was nobody there. He
500 looked round the room, and under the table, and a great many times behind him, but there was certainly nobody there, and he sat down again at the window. This time he didn't speak, but he couldn't help thinking again that it would
505 be very convenient if the river were really all gold.

"Not at all, my boy," said the same voice, louder than before.

"Bless me!" said Gluck again; "what *is* that?"
510 He looked again into all the corners, and cupboards, and then began turning round, and round, as fast as he could in the middle of the room, thinking there was somebody behind him, when the same voice struck again on his ear. It was
515 singing now very merrily, "Lala-lira-la;" no words, only a soft running effervescent melody, something like that of a kettle on the boil. Gluck looked out of the window. No, it was certainly in the house. Up-stairs, and down-stairs. No, it was
520 certainly in that very room, coming in quicker

time, and clearer notes, every moment. "Lala-lira-la." All at once it struck Gluck that it sounded louder near the furnace. He ran to the opening, and looked in; yes, he saw right, it seemed to be coming, not only out of the furnace, but out of ⁵²⁵ the pot. He uncovered it, and ran back in a great fright, for the pot was certainly singing! He stood in the farthest corner of the room, with his hands up, and his mouth open, for a minute or two, when the singing stopped, and the voice be- ⁵³⁰ came clear, and pronounciative.

"Hollo!" said the voice.

Gluck made no answer.

"Hollo! Gluck, my boy," said the pot again.

Gluck summoned all his energies, walked ⁵³⁵ straight up to the crucible, drew it out of the furnace, and looked in. The gold was all melted, and its surface as smooth and polished as a river; but instead of reflecting little Gluck's head, as he looked in, he saw meeting his glance from be- ⁵⁴⁰ neath the gold the red nose and sharp eyes of his old friend of the mug, a thousand times redder and sharper than ever he had seen them in his life.

"Come, Gluck, my boy," said the voice out of ⁵⁴⁵ the pot again, "I'm all right; pour me out."

But Gluck was too much astonished to do anything of the kind.

"Pour me out, I say," said the voice rather gruffly.

550

Still Gluck couldn't move.

"*Will* you pour me out?" said the voice passionately. "I'm too hot."

By a violent effort, Gluck recovered the use of
555 his limbs, took hold of the crucible, and sloped it so as to pour out the gold. But instead of a liquid stream, there came out, first, a pair of pretty little yellow legs, then some coat tails, then a pair of arms stuck a-kimbo, and, finally, the well-known
560 head of his friend the mug; all which articles, uniting as they rolled out, stood up energetically on the floor, in the shape of a little golden dwarf, about a foot and a half high.

"That's right!" said the dwarf, stretching out
565 first his legs and then his arms, and then shaking his head up and down, and as far round as it would go, for five minutes, without stopping; apparently with the view of ascertaining if he were quite correctly put together, while Gluck
570 stood contemplating him in speechless amazement. He was dressed in a slashed doublet of spun gold, so fine in its texture, that the prismatic colors gleamed over it, as if on a surface of mother of pearl; and, over this brilliant doublet, his
575 hair and beard fell full halfway to the ground, in waving curls, so exquisitely delicate that Gluck could hardly tell where they ended; they seemed to melt into air. The features of the face, however, were by no means finished with the same
580 delicacy; they were rather coarse, slightly inclining to coppery in complexion, and indicative, in expression, of a very pertinacious and intract-



"Pray, sir, were you my mug?"

able disposition in their small proprietor. When the dwarf had finished his self-examination, he
585 turned his small sharp eyes full on Gluck, and stared at him deliberately for a minute or two. "No, it wouldn't, Gluck, my boy," said the little man.

This was certainly rather an abrupt and unconnected mode of commencing conversation. It
590 might indeed be supposed to refer to the course of Gluck's thoughts, which had first produced the dwarf's observations out of the pot; but whatever it referred to, Gluck had no inclination to dispute
595 the dictum.

"Wouldn't it, sir?" said Gluck, very mildly and submissively indeed.

"No," said the dwarf, conclusively. "No, it wouldn't." And with that, the dwarf pulled his
600 cap hard over his brows, and took two turns, of three feet long, up and down the room, lifting his legs up very high, and setting them down very hard. This pause gave time for Gluck to collect his thoughts a little, and, seeing no great reason
605 to view his diminutive visitor with dread, and feeling his curiosity overcome his amazement, he ventured on a question of peculiar delicacy.

"Pray, sir," said Gluck rather hesitatingly, "were you my mug?"

610 On which the little man turned sharp round, walked straight up to Gluck, and drew himself up to his full height. "I," said the little man, "am the King of the Golden River." Where-

upon he turned about again, and took two more turns, some six feet long, in order to allow time⁶¹⁵ for the consternation which this announcement produced in his auditor to evaporate. After which, he again walked up to Gluck and stood still, as if expecting some comment on his communication.⁶²⁰

Gluck determined to say something at all events. "I hope your Majesty is very well," said Gluck.

"Listen!" said the little man, deigning no reply to this polite inquiry. "I am the King of⁶²⁵ what you mortals call the Golden River. The shape you saw me in, was owing to the malice of a stronger king, from whose enchantments you have this instant freed me. What I have seen of you, and your conduct to your wicked brothers,⁶³⁰ renders me willing to serve you; therefore, attend to what I tell you. Whoever shall climb to the top of that mountain from which you see the Golden River issue, and shall cast into the stream at its source three drops of holy water, for him,⁶³⁵ and for him only, the river shall turn to gold. But no one failing in his first, can succeed in a second attempt; and if any one shall cast unholy water into the river, it will overwhelm him, and he will become a black stone." So saying, the⁶⁴⁰ King of the Golden River turned away and deliberately walked into the center of the hottest flame of the furnace. His figure became red, white, transparent, dazzling—a blaze of intense

⁶⁴⁵ light — rose, trembled, and disappeared. The King of the Golden River had evaporated.

“Oh!” cried poor Gluck, running to look up the chimney after him; “Oh, dear, dear, dear me! My mug! my mug! my mug!”



CHAPTER III.

HOW MR. HANS SET OFF ON AN EXPEDITION TO
THE GOLDEN RIVER, AND HOW HE
PROSPERED THEREIN.

THE King of the Golden River had hardly made the extraordinary exit related in the ⁶⁵⁵ last chapter, before Hans and Schwartz came roaring into the house, very savagely drunk. The discovery of the total loss of their last piece of plate had the effect of sobering them just enough to enable them to stand over Gluck, ⁶⁶⁰ beating him very steadily for a quarter of an hour; at the expiration of which period they dropped into a couple of chairs, and requested to know what he had got to say for himself. Gluck told them his story, of which, of course, ⁶⁶⁵ they did not believe a word. They beat him again, till their arms were tired, and staggered to bed. In the morning, however, the steadiness with which he adhered to his story obtained him some degree of credence; the immediate conse- ⁶⁷⁰ quence of which was, that the two brothers, after wrangling a long time on the knotty question, which of them should try his fortune first, drew their swords and began fighting. The noise of the fray alarmed the neighbors, who, finding ⁶⁷⁵

they could not pacify the combatants, sent for the constable.

Hans, on hearing this, contrived to escape, and hid himself; but Schwartz was taken before
680 the magistrate, fined for breaking the peace, and, having drunk out his last penny the evening before, was thrown into prison till he should pay.

When Hans heard this, he was much delighted,
685 and determined to set out immediately for the Golden River. How to get the holy water was the question. He went to the priest, but the priest could not give any holy water to so abandoned a character. So Hans went to vespers in
690 the evening for the first time in his life, and, under pretense of crossing himself, stole a cupful, and returned home in triumph.

Next morning he got up before the sun rose, put the holy water into a strong flask, and two
695 bottles of wine and some meat in a basket, slung them over his back, took his alpine staff in his hand, and set off for the mountains.

On his way out of the town he had to pass the prison, and as he looked in at the windows, whom
700 should he see but Schwartz himself peeping out of the bars, and looking very disconsolate.

"Good morning, brother," said Hans; "have you any message for the King of the Golden River?"

705 Schwartz gnashed his teeth with rage, and shook the bars with all his strength; but Hans

only laughed at him, and advising him to make himself comfortable till he came back again, shouldered his basket, shook the bottle of holy water in Schwartz's face till it frothed again,⁷¹⁰ and marched off in the highest spirits in the world.

It was, indeed, a morning that might have made any one happy, even with no Golden River to seek for. Level lines of dewy mist lay⁷¹⁵ stretched along the valley, out of which rose the massy mountains—their lower cliffs in pale gray shadow, hardly distinguishable from the floating vapor, but gradually ascending till they caught the sunlight, which ran in sharp touches⁷²⁰ of ruddy color along the angular crags, and pierced, in long level rays, through their fringes of spear-like pine. Far above, shot up red splintered masses of castellated rock, jagged and shivered into myriads of fantastic forms, with⁷²⁵ here and there a streak of sunlit snow, traced down their chasms like a line of forked lightning; and, far beyond, and far above all these, fainter than the morning cloud, but purer and changeless, slept, in the blue sky, the utmost⁷³⁰ peaks of the eternal snow.

The Golden River, which sprang from one of the lower and snowless elevations, was now nearly in shadow; all but the uppermost jets of spray, which rose like slow smoke above the un-⁷³⁵dulating line of the cataract, and floated away in feeble wreaths upon the morning wind.

On this object, and on this alone, Hans's eyes and thoughts were fixed; forgetting the distance
740 he had to traverse, he set off at an imprudent rate of walking, which greatly exhausted him before he had scaled the first range of the green and low hills. He was, moreover, surprised, on surmounting them, to find that a large glacier,
745 of whose existence, notwithstanding his previous knowledge of the mountains, he had been absolutely ignorant, lay between him and the source of the Golden River. He entered on it with the boldness of a practised mountaineer; yet he
750 thought he had never traversed so strange or so dangerous a glacier in his life. The ice was excessively slippery, and out of all its chasms came wild sounds of gushing water; not monotonous or low, but changeful and loud, rising occasionally
755 into drifting passages of wild melody, then breaking off into short melancholy tones, or sudden shrieks, resembling those of human voices in distress or pain. The ice was broken into thousands of confused shapes, but none, Hans thought,
760 like the ordinary forms of splintered ice. There seemed a curious *expression* about all their outlines—a perpetual resemblance to living features, distorted and scornful. Myriads of deceitful shadows, and lurid lights, played and floated
765 about and through the pale blue pinnacles, dazzling and confusing the sight of the traveler; while his ears grew dull and his head giddy with the constant gush and roar of the concealed

waters. These painful circumstances increased upon him as he advanced ; the ice crashed and 770 yawned into fresh chasms at his feet, tottering spires nodded around him, and fell thundering across his path ; and though he had repeatedly faced these dangers on the most terrific glaciers, and in the wildest weather, it was with a new 775 and oppressive feeling of panic terror that he leaped the last chasm, and flung himself, exhausted and shuddering, on the firm turf of the mountain.

He had been compelled to abandon his basket 780 of food, which became a perilous encumbrance on the glacier, and had now no means of refreshing himself but by breaking off and eating some of the pieces of ice. This, however, relieved his thirst ; an hour's repose recruited his hardy frame, and 785 with the indomitable spirit of avarice, he resumed his laborious journey.

His way now lay straight up a ridge of bare red rocks, without a blade of grass to ease the foot, or a projecting angle to afford an inch of shade 790 from the south sun. It was past noon, and the rays beat intensely upon the steep path, while the whole atmosphere was motionless, and penetrated with heat. Intense thirst was soon added to the bodily fatigue with which Hans was now afflicted ; 795 glance after glance he cast on the flask of water which hung at his belt. "Three drops are enough," at last thought he ; "I may, at least, cool my lips with it."

He opened the flask, and was raising it to his lips, when his eye fell on an object lying on the rock beside him; he thought it moved. It was a small dog, apparently in the last agony of death from thirst. Its tongue was out, its jaws dry, its
805 limbs extended lifelessly, and a swarm of black ants were crawling about its lips and throat. Its eye moved to the bottle which Hans held in his hand. He raised it, drank, spurned the animal with his foot, and passed on. And he
810 did not know how it was, but he thought that a strange shadow had suddenly come across the blue sky.

The path became steeper and more rugged every moment; and the high hill air, instead of
815 refreshing him, seemed to throw his blood into a fever. The noise of the hill cataracts sounded like mockery in his ears; they were all distant, and his thirst increased every moment. Another hour passed, and he again looked down to the
820 flask at his side; it was half empty, but there was much more than three drops in it. He stopped to open it; and again, as he did so, something moved in the path above him. It was a fair child, stretched nearly lifeless on the rock, its
825 breast heaving with thirst, its eyes closed, and its lips parched and burning. Hans eyed it deliberately, drank, and passed on. And a dark gray cloud came over the sun, and long, snake-like shadows crept up along the mountain sides. Hans
830 struggled on. The sun was sinking, but its descent



"Shuddering, he hurled it into the center of the torrent : staggered, shrieked, and fell"

seemed to bring no coolness; the leaden weight of the dead air pressed upon his brow and heart, but the goal was near. He saw the cataract of the Golden River springing from the hillside, 835 scarcely five hundred feet above him. He paused for a moment to breathe, and sprang on to complete his task.

At this instant a faint cry fell on his ear. He turned, and saw a gray-haired old man extended 840 on the rocks. His eyes were sunk, his features deadly pale, and gathered into an expression of despair. "Water!" he stretched his arms to Hans, and cried feebly, "Water! I am dying."

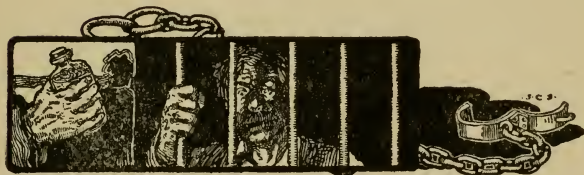
"I have none," replied Hans; "thou hast had 845 thy share of life." He strode over the prostrate body, and darted on. And a flash of blue lightning rose out of the East, shaped like a sword; it shook thrice over the whole heaven, and left it dark with one heavy, impenetrable shade. The 850 sun was setting; it plunged toward the horizon like a red-hot ball.

The roar of the Golden River rose on Hans's ear. He stood at the brink of the chasm through which it ran. Its waves were filled with the red 855 glory of the sunset, they shook their crests like tongues of fire, and flashes of bloody light gleamed along their foam. Their sound came mightier and mightier on his senses; his brain grew giddy with the prolonged thunder. Shuddering he drew 860 the flask from his girdle, and hurled it into the centre of the torrent. As he did so, an icy chill

shot through his limbs: he staggered, shrieked, and fell. The waters closed over his cry. And the moaning of the river rose wildly into the night, as it gushed over

865

The Black Stone



CHAPTER IV.

HOW MR. SCHWARTZ SET OFF ON AN EXPEDITION
TO THE GOLDEN RIVER, AND HOW HE
PROSPERED THEREIN.

POOR little Gluck waited very anxiously alone in the house for Hans's return. Finding he did not come back, he was terribly frightened and went and told Schwartz in the prison, 875 all that had happened. Then Schwartz was very much pleased, and said that Hans must certainly have been turned into a black stone, and he should have all the gold to himself. But Gluck was very sorry, and cried all night. When he got up in the 880 morning there was no bread in the house, nor any money; so Gluck went and hired himself to another goldsmith, and he worked so hard, and so neatly, and so long every day, that he soon got money enough together to pay his brother's fine, 885 and he went and gave it all to Schwartz, and Schwartz got out of prison. Then Schwartz was quite pleased, and said he should have some of the gold of the river. But Gluck only begged he would go and see what had become of Hans. 890 Now when Schwartz had heard that Hans had stolen the holy water, he thought to himself that

such a proceeding might not be considered altogether correct by the King of the Golden River, and determined to manage matters better. So he took some more of Gluck's money, and went⁸⁹⁵ to a bad priest, who gave him some holy water very readily for it. Then Schwartz was sure it was all quite right. So Schwartz got up early in the morning before the sun rose, and took some bread and wine, in a basket, and put his holy⁹⁰⁰ water in a flask, and set off for the mountains. Like his brother, he was much surprised at the sight of the glacier, and had great difficulty in crossing it, even after leaving his basket behind him. The day was cloudless, but not bright;⁹⁰⁵ there was a heavy purple haze hanging over the sky, and the hills looked lowering and gloomy. And as Schwartz climbed the steep rock path, the thirst came upon him, as it had upon his brother, until he lifted his flask to his lips to⁹¹⁰ drink. Then he saw the fair child lying near him on the rocks, and it cried to him, and moaned for water.

"Water, indeed," said Schwartz; "I haven't half enough for myself," and passed on. And as⁹¹⁵ he went he thought the sunbeams grew more dim, and he saw a low bank of black cloud rising out of the West; and, when he had climbed for another hour the thirst overcame him again, and he would have drunk. Then he saw the old man⁹²⁰ lying before him on the path, and heard him cry out for water. "Water, indeed," said Schwartz,

"I haven't half enough for myself," and on he went.

925 Then again the light seemed to fade before his eyes, and he looked up, and, behold, a mist, of the color of blood, had come over the sun; and the bank of black cloud had risen very high, and its edges were tossing and tumbling like the
930 waves of the angry sea. And they cast long shadows, which flickered over Schwartz's path.

Then Schwartz climbed for another hour, and again his thirst returned; and as he lifted his flask to his lips, he thought he saw his brother
935 Hans lying exhausted on the path before him, and, as he gazed, the figure stretched its arms to him, and cried for water. "Ha, ha," laughed Schwartz, "are you there? remember the prison bars, my boy. Water, indeed! do you suppose I carried
940 it all the way up here for *you*?" And he strode over the figure; yet, as he passed, he thought he saw a strange expression of mockery about its lips. And, when he had gone a few yards farther, he looked back; but the figure was not there.

945 And a sudden horror came over Schwartz, he knew not why; but the thirst for gold prevailed over his fear, and he rushed on. And the bank of black cloud rose to the zenith, and out of it came bursts of spiry lightning, and waves
950 of darkness seemed to heave and float between their flashes over the whole heavens. And the sky where the sun was setting was all level, and like a lake of blood; and a strong wind came out



"He thought he saw his brother lying exhausted before him"

of that sky, tearing its crimson cloud into frag-
955 ments, and scattering them far into the darkness.
And when Schwartz stood by the brink of the
Golden River, its waves were black, like thunder
clouds, but their foam was like fire; and the roar
of the waters below, and the thunder above, met,
960 as he cast the flask into the stream. And, as he
did so, the lightning glared into his eyes, and the
earth gave way beneath him, and the waters
closed over his cry. And the moaning of the
river rose wildly into the night, as it gushed
965 over the

Two Black Stones



CHAPTER V.

HOW LITTLE GLUCK SET OFF ON AN EXPEDITION
TO THE GOLDEN RIVER, AND HOW HE PROS-
PERED THEREIN; WITH OTHER
MATTERS OF INTEREST.

WHEN Gluck found that Schwartz did not come back he was very sorry, and did not know what to do. He had no money, and was obliged to go and hire himself again to⁹⁷⁵ the goldsmith, who worked him very hard, and gave him very little money. So, after a month or two, Gluck grew tired, and made up his mind to go and try his fortune with the Golden River. "The little King looked very kind," thought he.⁹⁸⁰ "I don't think he will turn me into a black stone." So he went to the priest, and the priest gave him some holy water as soon as he asked for it. Then Gluck took some bread in his basket, and the bottle of water, and set off very early for the⁹⁸⁵ mountains.

If the glacier had occasioned a great deal of fatigue to his brothers, it was twenty times worse for him, who was neither so strong nor so practised on the mountains. He had several bad⁹⁹⁰ falls, lost his basket and bread, and was very much frightened at the strange noises under the ice.

He lay a long time to rest on the grass, after he had got over, and began to climb the hill just in
995 the hottest part of the day. When he had climbed for an hour, he got dreadfully thirsty, and was going to drink like his brothers, when he saw an old man coming down the path above him, looking very feeble, and leaning on a staff. "My
1000 son," said the old man, "I am faint with thirst, give me some of that water." Then Gluck looked at him, and when he saw that he was pale and weary, he gave him the water; "Only pray don't drink it all," said Gluck. But the old man drank
1005 a great deal, and gave him back the bottle two-thirds empty. Then he bade him good speed, and Gluck went on again merrily. And the path became easier to his feet, and two or three blades of grass appeared upon it, and some grasshoppers
1010 began singing on the bank beside it; and Gluck thought he had never heard such merry singing.

Then he went on for another hour, and the thirst increased on him so that he thought he should be forced to drink. But, as he raised
1015 the flask, he saw a little child lying panting by the roadside, and it cried out piteously for water. Then Gluck struggled with himself, and determined to bear the thirst a little longer; and he put the bottle to the child's lips, and it
1020 drank it all but a few drops. Then it smiled on him, and got up and ran down the hill; and Gluck looked after it, till it became as small as a little star, and then turned and began climbing again.



*"And Gluck stopped and looked at it, and then at the Golden River, not
five hundred yards above him"*

And then there were all kinds of sweet flowers
1025 growing on the rocks, bright green moss with
pale pink starry flowers, and soft belled gentians,
more blue than the sky at its deepest, and pure
white transparent lilies. And crimson and purple
butterflies darted hither and thither, and the sky
1030 sent down such pure light, that Gluck had never
felt so happy in his life.

Yet, when he had climbed for another hour,
his thirst became intolerable again; and, when
he looked at his bottle, he saw that there were
1035 only five or six drops left in it, and he could
not venture to drink. And, as he was hanging
the flask to his belt again, he saw a little dog
lying on the rocks, gasping for breath—just as
Hans had seen it on the day of his ascent. And
1040 Gluck stopped and looked at it, and then at the
Golden River, not five hundred yards above him;
and he thought of the dwarf's words, "that no one
could succeed, except in his first attempt;" and he
tried to pass the dog, but it whined piteously, and
1045 Gluck stopped again. "Poor beastie," said Gluck,
"it'll be dead when I come down again, if I don't
help it." Then he looked closer and closer at it,
and its eye turned on him so mournfully, that he
could not stand it. "Confound the King and his
1050 gold too," said Gluck; and he opened the flask,
and poured all the water into the dog's mouth.

The dog sprang up and stood on its hind legs.
Its tail disappeared, its ears became long, longer,
silky, golden; its nose became very red, its eyes

became very twinkling; in three seconds the dog ¹⁰⁵⁵ was gone, and before Gluck stood his old acquaintance, the King of the Golden River.

"Thank you," said the monarch; "but don't be frightened, it's all right;" for Gluck showed manifest symptoms of consternation at this un- ¹⁰⁶⁰ looked-for reply to his last observation. "Why didn't you come before," continued the dwarf, "instead of sending me those rascally brothers of yours, for me to have the trouble of turning into stones? Very hard stones they make too." ¹⁰⁶⁵

"Oh dear me!" said Gluck, "have you really been so cruel?"

"Cruel!" said the dwarf: "they poured unholy water into my stream; do you suppose I'm going to allow that?" ¹⁰⁷⁰

"Why," said Gluck, "I am sure, sir,—your Majesty, I mean,—they got the water out of the church font."

"Very probably," replied the dwarf; "but," and his countenance grew stern as he spoke, "the ¹⁰⁷⁵ water which has been refused to the cry of the weary and dying, is unholy, though it had been blessed by every saint in heaven; and the water which is found in the vessel of mercy is holy, though it had been defiled with corpses." ¹⁰⁸⁰

So saying, the dwarf stooped and plucked a lily that grew at his feet. On its white leaves there hung three drops of clear dew. And the dwarf shook them into the flask which Gluck held in his hand. "Cast these into the river," he said, ¹⁰⁸⁵

“and descend on the other side of the mountains into the Treasure Valley. And so good speed.”

As he spoke, the figure of the dwarf became indistinct. The playing colors of his robe formed
1090 themselves into a prismatic mist of dewy light: he stood for an instant veiled with them as with the belt of a broad rainbow. The colors grew faint, the mist rose into the air; the monarch had evaporated.

1095 And Gluck climbed to the brink of the Golden River, and its waves were as clear as crystal, and as brilliant as the sun. And, when he cast the three drops of dew into the stream, there opened where they fell, a small circular whirlpool, into
1100 which the waters descended with a musical noise.

Gluck stood watching it for some time, very much disappointed, because not only the river was not turned into gold, but its waters seemed much diminished in quantity. Yet he obeyed his
1105 friend the dwarf, and descended the other side of the mountains, towards the Treasure Valley; and, as he went, he thought he heard the noise of water working its way under the ground. And, when he came in sight of the Treasure Valley,
1110 behold, a river, like the Golden River, was springing from a new cleft of the rocks above it, and was flowing in innumerable streams among the dry heaps of red sand.

And as Gluck gazed, fresh grass sprang beside
1115 the new streams, and creeping plants grew, and climbed among the moistening soil. Young



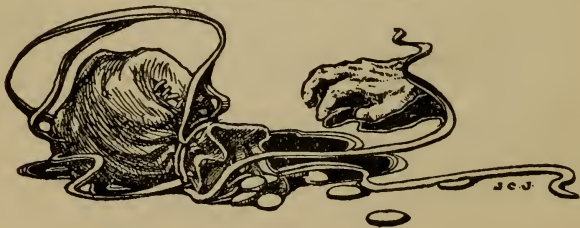
*"The figure of the dwarf became indistinct, and stood veiled as
with a rainbow"*

flowers opened suddenly along the river sides, as stars leap out when twilight is deepening, and thickets of myrtle, and tendrils of vine, cast
1120 lengthening shadows over the valley as they grew. And thus the Treasure Valley became a garden again, and the inheritance, which had been lost by cruelty, was regained by love.

And Gluck went, and dwelt in the valley, and
1125 the poor were never driven from his door; so that his barns became full of corn, and his house of treasure. And, for him, the river had, according to the dwarf's promise, become a River of Gold.

And, to this day, the inhabitants of the valley
1130 point out the place where the three drops of holy dew were cast into the stream, and trace the course of the Golden River under the ground, until it emerges in the Treasure Valley. And at the top of the cataract of the Golden River, are
1135 still to be seen TWO BLACK STONES, round which the waters howl mournfully every day at sunset; and these stones are still called by the people of the valley

The Black Brothers





A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

JOHN RUSKIN

THE author of *The King of the Golden River* was one of the greatest men of the last century. He believed that noble art is praise of what the artist loves, and in this little fairy story, as in his long and learned books, he praises the beauty of our wonderful world, its waters, skies, and mountains, and he praises what he loved even more—the beauty of unselfishness.

John Ruskin was born in London, February 8, 1819. His parents were Scotch, of Highland descent. His father, after a thorough schooling in Edinburgh, had gone to London and made his way from a humble clerkship to the position of a leading wine-merchant. This Mr. Ruskin, when he was well established in business and had, with a fine sense of honor, paid off old family debts, married a canny Scotch cousin and settled down with her to a quiet home life, which was brightened by an only child.

The child was a strange, lonely little fellow. He had no playmates and few playthings, but he could entertain himself for hours at a time by tracing the squares in his nursery carpet and the patterns in wall paper or bedspread, examining the knots in the wood of the floor, counting the bricks in the houses across the way, watching the

filling of the water-cart in the street, and, best of all, making friends with the garden trees and learning their secrets. Without companions of his own age and without pets, the boy spent his affections on snowdrops and almond blossoms. From season to season he watched the ways of growing plants. He plucked flowers to pieces until he had seen just how petals and cup were fitted together and where the seeds were stored. He would stare for hours at the drifting clouds in the sky or the darting minnows in the rivulet. He was a lover of nature even in his babyhood. "The first thing I remember as an event in life," Ruskin has written, "was being taken by my nurse to the brow of Friar's Crag, on Derwent-water. The intense joy, mingled with awe, that I had in looking through the mossy roots over the crag into the dark lake has associated itself more or less with all twining roots of trees ever since."

When the boy was a yellow-haired three-year-old in frock and sash, his parents had his portrait painted. In reply to the artist, who good-humoredly asked him what he would like to have for the background of his picture, the little Highlander promptly declared, "Blue hills."

After Ruskin had become a famous man, worn by labors and sorrows, his memory liked to dwell upon these early years, so that we have, in his own telling, many chapters from the history of that solitary child.

"First," he wrote, "I was taught to be obedient. That discipline began very early. One evening, — my mother being rather proud of this, told me the story often, — when I was yet in my nurse's arms, I wanted to touch the tea-urn, which was boiling merrily. It was an early taste for bronzes, I suppose, but I was resolute about it. My mother

bid me keep my fingers back. I insisted on putting them forward. My nurse would have taken me away from the urn, but my mother said, 'Let him touch it, Nurse.' So I touched it,—and that was my first lesson in the meaning of the word Liberty. It was the first piece of Liberty I got, and the last which for some time I asked for.

"Secondly, I was taught to be quiet. When I was a very little child, my parents not being rich, and my mother having to see to many things herself, she used to shut me into a room upstairs, with some bits of wood and a bunch of keys, and say, 'John, if you make a noise you shall be whipped.'

"To that piece of education I owe most of my powers of thinking; and,—more valuable to me still,—of amusing myself anywhere and with anything."

Mrs. Ruskin, for all her strictness, was a devoted mother, and indulged her son in a few simple toys that would call out his own ingenuity,—a cart, a ball, building blocks, a dissected bridge. And there was always the garden, where, on pleasant days, the family took tea together "under the white-heart cherry tree." In the evening small John had his own little recess, with a low writing-table before it, in the drawing room. Here he sat "as an idol in a niche," and busied himself with his childish printing and drawing, while his mother knitted and his father read aloud Scott's novels and Shakspeare's plays, giving the boy a pure first taste of English literature.

As he grew old enough for lessons, his mother, who hoped that he would be a clergyman, set aside the hours directly after breakfast for teaching him. The lessons consisted chiefly in reading the Bible through, from the beginning of Genesis to the end of Revelation, over and over and over,

and in learning by heart selected portions. These comprised the Song of Moses (Exodus xv.), the Commandments (Exodus xx.), David's lament over Saul and Jonathan (II. Samuel i., 17-27), the dedication of Solomon's temple (I. Kings viii.), psalms of praise and trust (xxiii., xxxii., xc., xci., ciii., cxii., cxix., cxxxix.), chapters from Proverbs urging youth to seek after wisdom (ii., iii., viii., xii.), one of the great poems of Isaiah (lviii.), the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew v., vi., vii.), Paul's defense before Agrippa (Acts xxvi.), Paul's teachings on charity and immortality (I. Corinthians xiii., xv.), James's counsel to pure life (James iv.), and the vision of the seven seals (Revelation v., vi.). All these chapters Ruskin, in his early childhood, committed to memory, and apparently others, for he mentions Deuteronomy xxxii. as having cost him much pains. It was hard work, "long morning hours of toil, as regular as sunrise," but it brought a great reward. The rich, poetical language of the Bible, with its haunting phrases and majestic images, all drilled, syllable by syllable, into the boy, made the man a mighty master of English prose, while the Hebrew earnestness and passion for righteousness, and the Christian gospel of self-sacrifice, entered deeply into his character. These Bible readings with his mother—continued until he went to Oxford—Ruskin counted in after life "the most precious and, on the whole, the one *essential* part" of his education. After his seventh year his mother added a Latin lesson to the Bible reading, but never gave him more to do than could be finished, with honest effort, by noon, when he was free to run out into the garden and watch a nest of ants or gather a heap of the most curious pebbles.

The Ruskins had a delightful way of teaching

their boy geography. Every summer the wine-merchant, with his family, used to travel for orders through half the English counties, and sometimes into Scotland and Wales. The journeying was done in an old-fashioned chariot, whose four sliding windows, Ruskin has written, "formed one large moving oriel, out of which one saw the country round, to the full half of the horizon. My own prospect was more extended still, for my seat was the little box containing my clothes, strongly made, with a cushion on one end of it, set upright in front (and well forward), between my father and mother. I was thus not the least in their way, and my horizon of sight the widest possible. When no object of particular interest presented itself, I trotted, keeping time with the postboy on my trunk-cushion for a saddle, and whipped my father's legs for horses; at first theoretically only, with dexterous motion of wrist, but ultimately in a quite practical and efficient manner, my father having presented me with a silver-mounted postillion's whip."

The yearly outing could not begin until after the tenth of May, Mr. Ruskin's birthday. This was the grand family festival, when little John was allowed, as a high privilege, to gather from a particular bush in the garden the gooseberries for his father's first gooseberry pie of the season. On these midsummer trips the boy learned not only something about the physical geography of the British Isles, but no small amount of English history, art, and architecture. Ruskin once said, in the course of a lecture: "Among the circumstances of my early life which I count most helpful, and for which I look back with more than filial gratitude to my father's care, was his fixed habit of stopping with me, on his business

journeys, patiently at any country inn that was near a castle or an abbey until I had seen all the pictures in the castle, and explored, as he always found me willing enough to do, all the nooks of the cloister. In these more romantic expeditions, aided and inspired by Scott, and never weary of re-reading the stories of *The Monastery*, *The Abbot*, and *The Antiquary*, I took an interest more deep than that of an ordinary child, and received impressions which guided and solemnized the whole subsequent tenor of my life."

This father, successful business man though he was, cared for beautiful things, poetry, painting, architecture, scenery. He encouraged his son to keep journals, sometimes in rhyme, on these trips, and to print or write out his notes carefully in gay-covered blank books, after they had returned home. He had the boy taught to draw, too, so that he could sketch bits of landscape and old buildings. John was an industrious verse-maker, and his father expected him to become a famous poet. In the larger sense of the words, Ruskin fulfilled the hopes of both his mother and his father. He became a great preacher of righteousness, though not in pulpits, and wrote volumes of soul-stirring poetry, but not in verse. The poems of his childhood and youth are interesting now chiefly because they show his constant love of nature. In his very earliest verses, written from the ages of eight to fourteen, he praises the beauty of icicles, streams, waterfalls, clouds, moonlight, and, above all, mountains.

"There is a thrill of strange delight
That passes quivering o'er me,
When blue hills rise upon the sight
Like summer clouds before me."

On his fourteenth birthday the boy received from one of his father's partners the gift of *Rogers' Italy*. This is a volume of poetry describing Italian scenes, exquisitely illustrated by Turner, an English artist, who, until Ruskin became his champion, was little appreciated.

The following summer the family took their carriage-drive on the continent, through Flanders, Germany, Switzerland, northern Italy, and France. What his first view of the Alps meant to Ruskin he related, half a century later, in the story of his early life. They broke upon his sight "suddenly—behold—beyond.

"There was no thought in any of us for a moment of their being clouds. They were clear as crystal, sharp on the pure horizon sky, and already tinged with rose by the sinking sun. Infinitely beyond all that we had ever thought or dreamed,—the seen walls of lost Eden could not have been more beautiful to us; nor more awful, round heaven, the walls of sacred Death. . . .

"Thus, in perfect health of life and fire of heart, not wanting to be anything but the boy I was, not wanting to have anything more than I had; knowing of sorrow only just so much as to make life serious to me, not enough to slacken in the least its sinews; and with so much of science mixed with feeling as to make the sight of the Alps not only the revelation of the beauty of the earth, but the opening of the first page of its volume,—I went down that evening from the garden-terrace of Schaffhausen with my destiny fixed in all of it that was to be sacred and useful."

In this boyhood life all that Ruskin afterward came to be and to accomplish had its roots. The necessary lessons in school and with private tutors

meant less to him than his own independent studies. He read his classics faithfully and worked out his mathematics, but his heart was in the collecting of minerals, sketching, writing. He was nearly eighteen when he entered upon his university course in the beautiful gray city of Oxford. He did not distinguish himself there except by a prize poem. His university studies were not his chief interest. He cared more for his private lessons in water-color painting and for a series of articles on *The Poetry of Architecture* that he was writing for a magazine. He spent much time in picture galleries, especially before the richly-colored dream landscapes of Turner, of which his wealthy father would sometimes buy him one for a birthday or New Year's gift. Just before he came of age, illness broke off his Oxford course. Mr. and Mrs. Ruskin, in deep anxiety for their only son, took him abroad for a year and then placed him under a physician's care at an English health resort, Leamington. It was here that Ruskin, an invalid youth of twenty-two, wrote *The King of the Golden River* to please a little Scotch girl, who afterward became his wife.

By the following spring Ruskin was able to go back to Oxford for his examinations, which he dreaded, and passed. He took his degree and was ready for his life-work. This he promptly began with the first volume of *Modern Painters*, whose chief aim was to convince the British public that Turner, strange as his glowing canvases might seem, was faithful to the truth of nature, to her mists and seas and sunsets. The book aroused wide interest, and for twenty years Ruskin stood before the English-speaking world as a great art-critic. *Modern Painters* grew into a work of five volumes. It told its thousands of readers not

only how to look at pictures, but how to see the beauty of the earth. It taught, said Ruskin himself, "the claim of all lower nature on the hearts of men; of the rock, and wave, and herb, as a part of their necessary spirit life." There were two famous books on architecture, also, striving to show that noble building depends on noble, happy life.

As the years went by and middle age was reached, Ruskin came to feel that even art was less important than human welfare. The hunger and dirt and ugliness in which many of England's poor had to live weighed upon his heart and conscience. He began to write books against money-making for money's sake. He wanted men to work together in business as friends, not against one another as rivals. He liked hand-work, not machine-work. He thought country life sweeter than city life, and he hated to see railroads and coal mines staining the beauty of English valleys. He wrote in stinging words, like an old Hebrew prophet, and the very people who had so admired his earlier volumes became angry and scornful. They said his ideas were mere whims and crotchets, though put in such splendid language. They called him "the crotcheteer with the tongue of gold." They bade him go back to writing about art and nature. But Ruskin could not forget the sorrows of men in the beauty of pictures and landscapes any more. He was honored with a high office, the professorship of fine arts in Oxford University, and yet it was while holding this position, and lecturing to enthusiastic throngs of undergraduates on sculpture and engraving, that Ruskin wrote, in the first number of his monthly pamphlet for working-men:

"For my own part, I will put up with this state

of things, passively, not an hour longer. I am not an unselfish person, nor an evangelical one. I have no particular pleasure in doing good; neither do I dislike doing it so much as to expect to be rewarded for it in another world. But I simply cannot paint, nor read, nor look at minerals, nor do anything else that I like, and the very light of the morning sky, when there is any—which is seldom, now-a-days, near London—has become hateful to me, because of the misery that I know of, and see signs of, where I know it not, which no imagination can interpret too bitterly.

“Therefore, as I have said, I will endure it no longer quietly; but henceforward, with any few or many who will help, do my poor best to abate this misery.”

He was as good as his word. He established a company whose members were known as Companions of St. George. These were to give one-tenth of their living to the common cause, and Ruskin led the way by deeding over something more than thirty thousand dollars from the fortune his father had left him, a fortune entirely spent, before his death, chiefly in efforts to help the world. The funds of St. George's Guild were to go toward buying farms, building mills, and opening schools, for the Companions of St. George dreamed the old, fair dream of making a little paradise on earth. In the end there was not much to show for all their self-denial and their labors, but the spirit of Ruskin's sublime attempt is still at work among us, prompting many a generous movement to aid the oppressed and to promote whatsoever things are pure and lovely and of good report.

Ruskin died on January 20, 1900, leaving some fourscore volumes to repeat his message—to

help those who have eyes, to see the beauty of the earth; to help those who have ears, to hear the moaning of the poor. This Alpine story of *The King of the Golden River*, though one of the least of Ruskin's books, is full of his glorious nature-pictures, as bright as if they had come from Turner's brush. It breathes, too, Ruskin's indignation with selfish greed. It honors labor, self-sacrifice, and mercy. Little Gluck was worthy to become a Companion of St. George.



St. George's Guild

One

I TRUST in the Living God, Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and earth, and of all things and creatures, visible and invisible. I trust in the kindness of His law and the goodness of His work. And I will strive to love Him and to keep His law, and to see His work while I live.

Two

I TRUST in the nobleness of human nature—in the majesty of its faculties, the fullness of its mercy, and the joy of its love. And I will strive to love my neighbor as myself, and even when I cannot, I will act as if I did.

Three

I WILL labor, with such strength and opportunity as God gives me, for my own daily bread; and all that my hand finds to do, I will do it with my might.

Four

I WILL not deceive, nor cause to be deceived, any human being, for my gain or pleasure; nor hurt, nor cause to be hurt, any human being for my gain or pleasure; nor rob, nor cause to be robbed, any human being for my gain or pleasure.

Five

I WILL not kill nor hurt any living creature needlessly, nor destroy any beautiful thing; but will strive to save and to comfort all gentle life, and guard and perfect all natural beauty upon the earth.

Six

I WILL strive to raise my own body and soul daily into higher powers of duty and happiness; not in rivalry or contention with others, but for the help, delight, and honor of others, and for the joy and peace of my own life.

Seven

I WILL obey all the laws of my country faithfully; and the orders of its monarch, so far as such laws and commands are consistent with what I suppose to be the law of God; and when they are not so, or seem in any wise to need change, I will oppose them loyally and deliberately—not with malicious, concealed or disorderly violence.

Eight

AND with the same faithfulness, and under the limits of the same obedience, which I render to the laws of my country and the commands of its rulers, I will obey the laws of the Society called of St. George.



I. BOOKS BY RUSKIN.

Ruskin's books were not, the most of them, written for children ; but there are a few from which young readers may gather much, if not the whole.

SESAME AND LILIES is a small volume, made up of two lectures. The first, "Of Kings' Treasuries," is "about books, and about the way we read them, and could, or should, read them." If Ruskin seems, in this essay, to speak severely of the wrong in the world, it is because he cared so greatly for the right. The second, "Of Queens' Gardens," is a book for girls, telling them in earnest, wonderful words how to be beautiful and make beauty wherever they go.

THE ETHICS OF THE DUST. Ten talks with a group of merry schoolgirls about crystals.

PRÆTERITA. The story of Ruskin's early life. Some portions of the first volume, at least, would be interesting to children.

II. ABOUT MOUNTAINS.

Coleridge's "Hymn Before Sunrise in the Vale of Chamouni."

Hans Christian Andersen's "The Ice Maiden."

Irving's "Rip Van Winkle."

Hawthorne's "The Great Stone Face."

Hawthorne's "The Great Carbuncle."

Tyndall's "The Glaciers of the Alps."

Hunt down in books of Greek mythology the stories about Oreads.

III. ABOUT WATER SPIRITS.

Fouqué's "Undine."

Matthew Arnold's "The Forsaken Merman."

Matthew Arnold's "The Neckan."

Kingsley's "Water Babies."

Coleridge's "The Ancient Mariner."

Hunt down in books of Greek mythology the stories about Neptune, the Tritons, Proteus, the Sirens.

IV. ABOUT WIND SPIRITS.

Macdonald's "At the Back of the North Wind."

Longfellow's "Hiawatha," Chapter II. "The Four Winds."

Hans Christian Andersen's "The Story of the Wind."

Hunt down in books of Greek mythology the stories about Boreas, Æolus, and Hermes, or, as the Romans called him, Mercury.

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